

Claims 1-31 (Previously cancelled)

Claim 32 (Cancelled)

Claim 33 (Presently amended): An access device for providing messages to a user device comprising:

a network interface unit having an interface to receive network communications signals and a signal output to provide a first communications signal;

interface circuitry having an input to receive user device communications signals and an output to provide a second communications signal;

a processing unit having a first input coupled to said interface circuitry output, An access device as in claim 32, wherein said processing unit has a second input to receive power supply status signals, a storage output to provide control signals said processing unit having and a second output coupled to a third input of said line driver to provide a power supply status indication, said line driver drive output to further;

a storage unit having a first input coupled to said network interface unit signal output to receive network-originated messages, said storage unit having a second input coupled to said processing unit storage output to receive said control signals, said storage unit having an output to provide received messages; and

a line driver having a first input coupled to said network interface unit signal output and a second input coupled to said storage unit output, a third input coupled to said second output of said processing unit, said line driver having a drive output to

provide said first communications signal, said received messages and said power supply status indication.

Claim 34 (Original): An access device as in claim 33, wherein said storage unit output provides at least one received message responsive to a user device assuming an off-hook state.

Claim 35 (Presently amended): An access device as in claim 34, wherein at least one of said received messages comprises at least one of a public announcement, a weather announcement, a subscription service message, a voice mail message, and a ~~warning~~ warning message.

Claim 36 (Original): An access device as in claim 34, wherein at least one of said received messages comprises at least one of a tone and a melody.

Claim 37 (Original): An access device as in claim 34, wherein the access device is an EMTA.

Claim 38 (Original): An access device as in claim 34, wherein the access device is a cable access unit.

Claim 39 (Original): A system for providing a backup power supply status indication to a user device, comprising:

a line driver having a power input to receive power and a network interface to receive communications signals from a communications network;

a backup power supply having a power output coupled to said line driver power input, said backup power supply adapted to supply backup power to said line driver when the supply of main power fails, said backup power supply having a status output to provide a signal indicating a power condition of said backup power supply;

a processor unit having a first input coupled to said backup power supply status output, said processor unit having a first output to provide a backup power supply status indication in response to said signal, said processor unit first output coupled to a second input of said line driver;

a storage unit having a first input to receive messages from said communications network, said storage unit having an output coupled to a third input of said line driver to provide a received message; and

at least one user device having an input coupled to a drive output of said line driver to receive at least one of the backup power supply status indication and one or more of said received messages.

Claim 40 (Original): A system as in claim 39, further comprising:

interface circuitry having an input coupled to an output of said at least one user device, said interface circuitry having an output to provide an indication that a user device has assumed an off-hook state, said interface circuitry output coupled to a second input of said processing circuitry, said processing circuitry having a second output coupled to a second input of said storage unit to provide a control signal, at least one of

said received messages provided by said storage unit output in response to said control signal.

Claim 41 (Original): A system as in claim 40, wherein the backup power supply status indication comprises an indication that the backup power supply is on.

Claim 42 (Original): A system as in claim 40, wherein the backup power supply status indication comprises a voice message indicating the power condition of said backup power supply status.

Claim 43 (Original): A system as in claim 40, wherein the backup power supply status indication comprises an audible sound associated with the power condition of said backup power supply status.

Claim 44 (Original): A system as in claim 40, wherein the line driver and processing unit are contained in an EMTA.

Claim 45 (Original): A system as in claim 40, wherein the line driver and processing unit are contained in a cable access unit.

Claim 46 (Original): A system as in claim 40, wherein the user device is selected from a phone set, a computer, an answering machine, a facsimile machine, and a television.

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Claim 47 (Original): A system as in claim 40, wherein a plurality of user devices are coupled to the access device.

Claim 48 (Cancelled)